

MINUTES
ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION
July 21, 2011

PRESIDING – Ken Real, Chairman

SECRETARY – Linda Casey, State Forester

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT – Ken Real, Johnny McReynolds, Don Heath, Melisa Love, Jerry Smith, Randy Gilmore and Irvin Eatman.

ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION PERSONNEL PRESENT – Linda Casey, Patrick Glass, Tom Conway, Bruce Springer, Neil Letson and Regina Miller.

GUESTS – Salem Saloom, Tommy Thompson, Van Roberts, Rep. Randy Wood, Steve Guy and Roy McAuley.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – Chairman Ken Real called the meeting of the Alabama Forestry Commission to order at 9:59 a.m. on July 21, 2011 in the Commission's state office executive conference room, 513 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104.

ROLL CALL – Regina Miller called roll. All Commissioners were present. Miller announced that a quorum was present.

Miller stated that the meeting had been properly advertised.

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 20, 2011 MEETING – Commissioner Johnny McReynolds made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2011 meeting. Commissioner Don Heath seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

CALHOUN COUNTY LAND TRANSACTION - Chief Van Roberts of the Quad Cities Volunteer Fire Department requested to purchase 2 acres of land currently being leased by the department and owned by the Commission in Calhoun County. The department has outgrown their existing building and must own the land in order to borrow money to build a larger building.

Commissioner Heath made a motion to sell the Quad Cities Volunteer Fire Department the 2 acres the department requested at the appraised value of \$4,900 per acre for a total of \$9,800.00. Commissioners Randy Gilmore seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION TREE DONATION PROGRAM – Neil Letson, Asst. Division Director of the Protection Division, announced a campaign of the National Arbor Day Foundation where the Foundation will donate a tree seedling for every dollar donated in order to replant trees in the tornado disaster areas of Alabama. According to Letson, one hundred percent of the funds donated will be used to purchase seedlings.

He asked Commissioners to help spread this information to whomever they could – citizens, businesses, organizations, etc.

BUDGET CAMPAIGN – Assistant State Forester, Patrick Glass, described the Commission's budget campaign with employees targeting citizens, landowners, legislators and our partners to support the Commission's budget request. As a result of the campaign, a gain of \$2,581,278 over the Governor's initial budget recommendation or a 38% increase was obtained.

2012 OPERATING BUDGET – State Forester, Linda Casey, reported the estimated total revenue minus stimulus and volunteer fire department funding will be \$21.6 million dollars. An estimated operating cost with 260 employees and equipment replacement costs will be \$23.2 million dollars. She expressed concerns regarding an insufficient number of firefighters, equipment replacement, and uncertainty of FY2012 federal funding.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT – General Counsel, Tom Conway, reported that the Commission's two pieces of law enforcement legislation were not passed during the legislative session as well as a provision for the emergency sale of timber on land owned by the Commission.

ALABAMA FOREST RECOVERY TASK FORCE – East Cent Regional Forester, Bruce Springer, stated that he is co-chair of the Forest Health and Reforestation Committee (Rural Lands) along with Neil Letson (Urban Lands) and that Commissioner-appointee, Tommy Thompson, appointed by Governor Bentley is overall Chairman. Springer reported on the Commission's activities under the Alabama Forest Recovery Task Force which Governor Bentley enacted following the devastating tornadoes in April. Targeted areas include working with nurseries and forest products companies to ensure an adequate supply of seedlings over the next 2-3 years, survey the availability of contract service providers for reforestation efforts, explore the possibility of federal assistance to landowners for recovery and reforestation efforts, evaluate federal and state tax laws to determine whether changes are needed to provide appropriate relief to affected landowners, implement proactive measures to mitigate wildfire risks, and habitat and watershed restoration.

Springer explained that Commission employees worked in the local affected disaster areas and Guntersville State Park with IC Command Teams and Strike Teams. Some of the work done by Commission employees included handling logistics and supply deliveries and chain saw/debris removal.

NEW ACCOUNTING SYSTEM – Patrick Glass discussed that the Commission is developing a new accounting system to bring the Commission in compliance with OMB Circulars A-87 and A-102.

AGENCY PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE – State Forester Casey reported that she and Corky Pugh with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources were discussing how the two agencies could better interact with one another and that this discussion grew to include the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and the Natural

Resources Conservation Service in Alabama. This Alabama Landowner Technical Assistance Team's (ALTAT) mission is to integrate management advice to landowners that includes forest management and wildlife habitat objectives. The ultimate goal of this joint initiative is to streamline services by being more efficient and providing more effective outreach and productivity.

Paul Brown with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System is chair of the team. The group is currently developing a DVD and brochure as outreach tools.

STATE FORESTERS REPORT – State Forester, Linda Casey, discussed Forest Stewardship Certification and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) agreements whereby the Commission and NRCS will partner to employ two Commission foresters on a full-time basis to become technical service providers for cap plans.

Casey reported that she will assume chair of the Southern Group of State Foresters at the end of the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) Annual Meeting in September and, as such, will serve on the Executive Committee of NASF.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE – Chairman Real appointed Commissioners Don Heath and Jerry Smith to serve as the nominating committee for 2012 officers and to report at the January, 2012 meeting.

DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING – Commissioners scheduled the next meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 20, 2011 at the Commission's state office, 513 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business, Commissioner Heath made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gilmore seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 12:33 p.m.